

in *Aphrophora major* Uhler and *A. pectoralis (costalis)* Matsumura though the chances are much lower since both are local species in the UK.

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The occurrence of soft scales (Coccidae) on ornamental yew *Taxus baccata* – An infestation of yew scale *Parthenolecanium pomericum* (Kawecki) and cottony camellia scale *Pulvinaria (Chloropulvinaria) floccifera* (Westwood) was rediscovered on one of the yew hedges in the second author's garden in Selling, Kent on 15 July 2007 (Plate 2, Fig. 4). The infestation was first noted in 1992, and, at the time, was the first known occurrence of cottony camellia scale on yew in the UK known to the first author. Control measures were subsequently taken and the two species have only resurfaced in noticeable numbers in the hedge during the past two years. Re-infestation of yew by *P. floccifera* may have occurred through the spread of motile first instars from some of the large *Camellia* bushes elsewhere in the garden which support low numbers of this species.

The current status of these insects in the UK based on records from the Central Science Laboratory is worth noting. True yew scale *P. pomericum* is not commonly recorded in Britain but has been collected throughout much of England and Wales, most frequently in the south. It is host specific to *Taxus* and occasionally numbers can build up causing chlorosis and defoliation.

Pulvinaria floccifera is particularly interesting, as it appears to be becoming more abundant, extending its geographical distribution and host range in Britain and is becoming more significant as a plant pest. Twenty years ago, this species was largely restricted in distribution outdoors to southern England. In recent years it has become more abundant (the Central Science Laboratory has received more samples of this species from different localities during the first half of 2007 than ever recorded previously during a similar period) and has extended its distribution northwards and is locally common in Yorkshire and Cumbria. Previously it was largely confined to *Camellia* and holly in Britain, but in recent years has been recorded from bay laurel, *Choisya*, *Citrus*, *Kalmia*, *Pieris*, *Pyracantha*, *Magnolia*, *Rhododendron*, *Trachelospermum* and yew.

It has become more important as a plant pest and is listed among the top ten garden pests by the Royal Horticultural Society (see www.rhs.org.uk). The foliage of infested plants often becomes covered in sooty mould which grows on the honeydew excreted by the scale insects. Extensive damage to rhododendrons has recently been reported from the Lake District. The changes in status are presumably due in part to climate change and it is highly likely that more and more gardeners will encounter *P. floccifera* in the future. – CHRIS MALUMPHY, Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York YO4 1LZ & JOHN BADMIN, Coppice Place, Selling, Kent ME13 9RP